

IN THESE TIMES

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TOM GALLAGHER
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DEEP IN THE
HEART

OF

TAXES

Mondale dogs Reagan

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Photographer unknown

Controversy over plutonium heats up

By Harvy Lipman

WASHINGTON

Since the dawn of the atomic age, the U.S. government maintained a policy of not mixing uranium and plutonium from civilian reactors with radioactive materials used in the federal weapons program. Republican and Democratic administrations alike held to the premise first put forth under the "Atoms for Peace" program in the early '50s: the only way to promote nuclear energy was to keep civilian programs untainted by the bomb.

But with the Reagan age that philosophy changed. Two years ago, Energy Secretary Donald Hodel set off a major row with Congress when he suggested that spent plutonium fuel from civilian reactors be used in the Energy Department's weapons plants. His suggestion outraged liberals and anti-nukers and drew heated criticism from some of the most devoted supporters of nuclear energy. The Atomic Industrial Forum, the civilian nuclear power industry's trade organization, and Wyoming Republican Sen. Alan Simpson—one of the Senate's leading nuclear advocates—both spoke out against the plan. In fact, Simpson co-sponsored legislation with Sen. Gary Hart (C-CO) that created a ban on the use of such spent fuel for weapons.

Now Reagan's Energy Department is at it again, and this time not only has it drawn the ire of Congress, but it's also created a political problem for one of the leading American allies. The new dispute centers on the department's program for developing breeder reactors (nuclear reactors that generate more plutonium as they operate). Most plutonium in the test breeders was loaned to the program from the weapons program. But about four tons of it comes from Great Britain. That plutonium was given to the U.S. in the late '60s in exchange for some other nuclear material.

The agreement under which that deal was made allows the U.S. to use the plutonium for weapons, but the British say they've been promised by American administrations for two decades that the material would be used only in non-military programs. Yet in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee in March last year, the head of the Energy Department's weapons program said his agency intended to convert the plutonium from the breeder research program to weapons. Herman Roser's testimony was declassified recently, and it didn't take long for someone in Congress to sit up and take notice. That someone was New York Democrat Richard Ottinger.

Ottinger was not only angered that the administration would go back on 20 years of promises to the British, but also that it was once again talking about transferring plutonium from a civilian reactor to weapons production. He introduced an amendment to the Energy Department authorization bill banning the transfer of breeder plutonium.

In response to Ottinger's concerns, the Energy Department sent the Congress member a letter saying: "It has been and is the policy of this department not to use this [the British] plutonium material for weapons." But the administration continued to lobby hard against the bill, saying that since the American plutonium in the breeder program had come from the military, any plutonium produced by that program should go back to the military.

Ottinger offered a compromise: he would change his bill to cover only the British plutonium. All the nuclear material generated from plutonium that originally came from U.S. military reactors could be transferred to weapons production. The

administration wouldn't budge.

Ottinger thinks he knows why: "They're out on a path to try to promote nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. [They] don't give a hoot and a holler about what the rest of the world thinks, or about the dangers that they're creating."

The administration is apparently unconcerned that it may be providing ammunition for opponents of Margaret Thatcher's government, one of its strongest allies. Thatcher has already drawn heat from the opposition Labour Party and anti-nuclear activists because of her wholehearted support for deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles in Great Britain. Now the possibility—however remote—that the warheads in those missiles could end up containing some of Britain's own plutonium has stirred up a new controversy. The British press is making an issue of that possibility, and a report by the Congressional Research Service suggests that a revelation that the British plutonium was being used in American weapons would revitalize the anti-nuclear wing of the Labour Party.

Energy Department officials say they don't want to give up authority over any portion of the plutonium in the breeder program because the military might need it in the future. Although no one from the department would agree to be interviewed by *In These Times*, its public affairs office provided written answers to a series of questions.

"The department's defense programs are producing and utilizing plutonium at or near full capacity," read one answer. "If critical shortages of defense plutonium essential to national security were experienced at some future time, it would not be in the national interest to prohibit utilization of this defense material in defense activities."

The answers also restate the department's position that it "is not relying on plutonium supplied by the United Kingdom to meet weapons requirements." Those assurances notwithstanding, British officials are uncomfortable with the administration position. Though embassy officials declined to be interviewed, congressional staffers say the British are angered by the Reagan administration's refusal to compromise over what is—at least in comparison to what's already in America's nuclear weapons stockpile—a minuscule amount of plutonium.

"We met with some British parliamentarians recently and they said if we hedge on our commitments it makes it much more difficult for Britain to rely on any of our representations," Ottinger noted.

Critics of the administration position also question the Energy Department's assertion that it might need the plutonium to keep up with Reagan's expanding nuclear weapons programs. Former Deputy CIA Director Herbert Scoville Jr. was among several intelligence and arms control experts to sign a letter written by the Environmental Policy Institute urging passage of the Ottinger amendment. Scoville said, "There is no firm, approved weapons program that requires this plutonium. It's more or less that they just want to have a lot they can keep on the shelf in case they need it in the future. From my experience when I was in the government, we had more than enough to take care of our weapons programs, and that was with an anticipation of a big ballistic missile defense system that would have required more warheads."

But Ottinger and other opponents of the Energy Department's plan say the transfer of plutonium from the breeder research and

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development program to weapons raises a more fundamental concern: the survival of the human race. "The issue is the commitment the other nations have made in the non-proliferation treaty not to build bombs," Ottinger said. The fundamental underpinning of that treaty, he claims, is the agreement that civilian nuclear materials will not be converted to weapons. "If the United States sets an example by using civilian materials for military purposes, it will make it very difficult to get that treaty extended, and the treaty expires shortly."

"One of the basic elements of our non-proliferation policy was to try to make a clear-cut separation between peaceful nuclear programs and weapons programs. We never would have gotten many of the countries to sign the non-proliferation treaty had it not been for that clear-cut understanding. Now if we go about and change that policy, it's very hard to turn to the Indians, or the Brazilians, or the Argentines, or the Pakistanis, and say you can't take plutonium from your peaceful power programs and put it into weapons. It just puts us in a very bad position and undercuts the whole basis of our non-proliferation policy."

After the administration rejected Ottinger's compromise offer, he went ahead with the full amendment—calling for an outright ban on the transfer of any plutonium from the breeder program to weapons. The Energy Department tried to head off the amendment by warning that if it passed the administration would pull all the plutonium that originated in military reactors out of the breeder program.

But the House Energy Committee approved the amendment anyway, adding one minor change. The committee decided to let the DOE return to the weapons program the amount of plutonium that was originally loaned to the breeder program, but the extra plutonium generated by the breeders stays in the civilian program. The proposal now awaits action by the full House, and a similar bill is expected to be introduced soon in the Senate.



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All the current tax proposals will make the poor pay more

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

BY CHALLENGING PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan to reveal how he would raise taxes in 1985, former Vice President Walter Mondale has made taxation a central issue of his presidential campaign. His challenge brings the debate over tax reform that has been preoccupying Washington for the last two years to center stage. Spurred by Sen. Bill Bradley and Rep. Richard Gephardt's (D-MO) plan to simplify the tax code, proponents of progressive and regressive consumption taxes, flat taxes and national sales taxes have championed their plans.

But Mondale has also moved the debate onto a terrain where liberals, labor and the left have fared poorly during the last six years and has implicitly committed the Democrats to backing a tax increase in 1985, regardless of who wins in November.

Conflicting priorities.

In providing revenue for government operations, taxes have also been used to accomplish two other, sometimes conflicting aims—stimulating business and redistributing wealth. Since the early 19th century, when regressive tariffs and excise taxes were the principal means of raising revenue, to the 20th century, when they were eclipsed by the individual and corporate income tax, the debate over taxes has swung between these two aims.

Under pressure from the civil rights and new left movements in 1969, Congress passed a redistributive tax reform eliminating loopholes that businesses and the wealthy had used to avoid paying taxes. But with the decline of the '60s left, the Republican right and business lobbies have won new incentives for busi-

ness and lower rates for the wealthy since 1978.

The current counter-reform in taxes has been led nationally by Rep. Jack Kemp (R-NY), the principal advocate in Congress of supply-side economics, and former Treasury official Charls Walker, the heavy-jowled chairman of the American Council for Capital Formation. Walker, a Texan and close associate of John Connally, was recently described by one former Johnson administration official as "the second most powerful man in Washington."

Kemp and Walker co-opted the popular and largely local tax revolt of the late '70s. While railing against high taxes, they insisted that taxes had to be reduced in such a way as to stimulate investment.

Democratic Keynesians had argued that the progressive income tax fostered economic growth by ensuring that income was spent (the higher the income the greater the chance that income would be saved rather than spent).

But Kemp and Walker argued that what fueled growth was not demand but supply—in the form of the savings of the wealthy and the corporations. They blamed the stagnation of the '70s on high tax rates and argued that if they were lowered for the wealthy, all taxpayers would eventually benefit through increased economic growth. Kemp even argued that lowering tax rates on the wealthy would generate greater revenues.

In 1978, Walker's lobbying almost singlehandedly transformed President Jimmy Carter's tax reform proposal, which called for reducing deductions on capital gains, into a bill increasing capital gains deductions. It was adopted by Congress in October of that year.

In 1981, under Kemp's leadership, Congress passed Reagan's tax bill, which reduced tax rates across the board and provided new tax credits and deductions

for business. The effect of the two bills has been to grant the rich huge tax savings, virtually eliminating the corporate income tax and generating huge budget deficits (see Chart 1). Even after two subsequent tax increases, the Reagan bill was still expected to cost the Treasury \$644 billion in revenues from 1983 to 1987.

Rising deficits and an increasingly Byzantine tax code have prompted calls for tax increases and tax reform or simplification. But the proposals that have emerged since 1982, including the chief

crease the tax payments of middle income groups. Because Bradley-Gephardt eliminates the deduction for two earners, counts employer-paid health and life insurance as income, lowers the deduction for mortgage interest, eliminates the child care credit and repeals indexation, a typical two-earner family of four making \$30,000 and owning their own home would pay \$221 a year more under Bradley-Gephardt (see Chart 2).

Bradley and Gephardt describe their bill as "populist." The leaflet put out by their Citizens for a Fair Tax features a tearful taxpayer being crushed by Form 1040 and is headlined "Feel Crushed by Your Tax Burden?" At best, however, Bradley-Gephardt would save taxpayers time compiling returns and bring the government, in the long run, more revenue from the very rich. At worst, it simply rationalizes the inequities of the Reagan tax

CHART 1

Average Percent Tax Changes from the Reagan/Kemp-Roth Rate Cuts by Income Class, 1982-84, After Offsetting Tax Increases from Inflation and Higher Social Security Taxes.

(1981 Income Levels)

Income	% of all Taxpayers	Percent Change in Taxes
BIG LOSERS		
Under \$10	34.2%	48.9%
\$10-15	14.7%	
LITTLE CHANGE		
\$15-20	12.1%	46.2%
\$20-30	18.9%	
\$30-50	15.2%	
BIG WINNERS		
\$50-100	4.0%	4.9%
\$100-299	0.7%	
Over \$200	0.2%	

Source: Robert S. McIntyre and Dean C. Tipps, *Inequity and Decline*, 1983, pp. 23-25.

Democratic ones, have incorporated the assumptions of the supply-side Republican and business lobbyists.

Democratic plans.

Most Democrats have bought Walker and Kemp's argument about the need to increase savings. In both 1978 and 1981, a majority of Democratic senators backed the Republican bills. And leading Democratic economists Robert Reich and Lester Thurow have echoed the supply-side line on taxes.

The Bradley-Gephardt tax bill, introduced in the summer of 1983 to applause from the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*, does not alter the Reagan bill's after-tax distribution of income, but simplifies the way in which it is collected. It is based on the correct assumption that the rich (supposedly taxed at 50 percent) and the large corporation (supposedly taxed at 46 percent) use the numerous loopholes in the tax code to pay effective tax rates considerably lower. In 1982, for instance, the average effective tax rate on corporations was 16.1 percent. Bradley-Gephardt would simplify the code by eliminating most deductions and credits, while lowering tax rates for the rich and for corporations.

Under Bradley-Gephardt, families making less than \$40,000 would pay at a 14 percent rate, families making between \$40,000 and \$65,000 would pay at 26 percent and families making more than \$65,000 would pay 30 percent. The corporate tax rate would be cut to 30 percent.

While Bradley-Gephardt does not radically redistribute income, it still benefits some groups and harms others. Because of a larger personal exemption and an increase in the standard deduction, a family of four making \$11,200 would pay no taxes under Bradley-Gephardt. And a family of four making \$60,000 in salary and \$60,000 in interest and dividends would pay slightly less than before because of the plan's lower tax rates.

But befitting the effort of two silk-stocking Democrats, the plan will in-

cut, while demonstrating once again the Democrats' disdain for middle income earners.

The other Democratic alternatives are even worse. Economists at the Brookings Institution, the principal think tank for Democratic administrations, as well as neoliberal politicians and economists have been pushing a progressive consumption tax. The purpose of such a plan, economist Robert Reich writes, is to "encourage savings [so that there is more money to invest] without giving a windfall to the rich or placing a disproportionate burden on the poor."

With a consumption tax, families would be taxed each year for what they

The Democratic alternatives to Reagan's tax ideas accept the need to increase savings.

CAMPAIGN

spend, not for what they save or invest. A family that borrowed money to buy a car would be taxed for the money spent, even though it was not earned, while one that used its income to invest in a car company would not be taxed on that income.

Under the Democratic plans, the tax rates for the different levels of consumption would be progressive so as to preserve the existing level of average tax payments. But while such a plan might not disturb the vertical distribution of wealth, it would create new "horizontal inequities" among families and individuals making roughly the same income.

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CHART 2
Income Tax of a Typical Middle-Class Family under the Bradley-Gephardt Tax Bill

	1984 Law	Bradley-Gephardt Proposal
Income: Salary	*30,000	*30,000
Less: Two earner deduction	1,000	---
Plus: Employer paid health insurance	---	1,200
Employer paid life insurance	---	300
Equals: Adjusted Gross Income	29,000	31,500
Itemized deductions:		
Mortgage interest	5,000	5,000
Property taxes	1,500	1,500
Sales taxes	400	---
Income taxes	1,000	1,000
Charitable contributions	500	500
TOTAL	8,400	8,000
Less: Zero bracket amount	3,400	6,000
Equals: Excess Itemized Deductions	5,000	2,000
AGI	29,000	30,700
Less: Exemptions	4,000	5,000
Excess itemized deductions	5,000	2,000
Child care deductions	---	2,000
Equals: Taxable Income	20,000	21,700
TAX BEFORE CREDIT	**2,461	***2,282
Less: Child care credit	400	---
Equals: TAX AFTER CREDIT	2,061	2,282
Marginal tax rate	18%	14%

*Assumed \$20,000 earned by one spouse, \$10,000 by the other
**From 1984 law rate tables
***Taxable income less \$6,000 zero bracket amount times 14% tax rate
Source: *The Fair Tax*, by Sen. Bill Bradley, New York, 1984

INSHORT

Lawyers who need lawyers

The Reagan administration—in still another effort to paint Cuba as a danger for North Americans—has now taken on a small New York travel agency and lawyers from the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the National Lawyers Guild (NLG). Late last month the Treasury Department's Foreign Assets Control Office subpoenaed Marazul Tours, forcing it to turn over names of 13,000 Americans who've visited Cuba since the 1982 travel restrictions. Most of these were Cuban-Americans visiting relatives, but about 2,000 visited the island for research and professional reasons—and it's these records that the Treasury Department will scrutinize more closely. A second subpoena zeroed in on a legal conference scheduled for September 16-23 in Havana, hosted by the Cuban Ministry of Justice and the National Union of Cuban Jurists and planned by CCR lawyers. The Treasury Department asked Marazul to furnish it with the names of the 2,000 lawyers on the mailing list for the conference. This caused an uproar at the NLG and the CCR that caused the government to rethink its tactics—now it seeks only the names of lawyers who attend the conference, not the entire mailing list.

As *In These Times* went to press, the trip is still on (with eight or so lawyers braving the possible harassment), and Marazul successfully avoided having to turn over the CCR's original mailing list. But the subpoenas represent a new form of government intimidation. A new form with an old purpose, however, says David Lerner of the CCR: "Our entire Central American policy right now rests on the attempt of the administration to make Cuba a bugaboo. This is one more effort in that direction."

Strangers on the right?

A group of Catholics mostly aligned with conservative interests, fearing that the upcoming bishops' pastoral on the economy will go too far in its criticism of American capitalism, will release their own report on November 11, one day before the bishops' is due. Gregory Bergman reports that the lineup for the 32-member American Catholic committee reads for the most part like a who's who in right-wing Catholic circles: former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, corporate head J. Peter Grace who was recently associated with anti-Sandinista efforts (see *In These Times*, August 8), along with 16 CEOs from major U.S. corporations. The few exceptions to this corporate and ideological battalion are notable, however. Edward Cleary of the New York AFL-CIO joined the committee because he thought it was important for the bishops to hear from business and labor. He dropped out a few weeks ago, however, because "the more I found out about the committee the more I realized it was Michael Novak trying to slam the bishops' statement before it even appeared. I wonder where he got this crystal ball." The other labor leader, John Henning of the California Labor Federation, has in the past been a spokesperson for left causes in the labor movement. Though *In These Times* was anxious to ask Henning what it was like listening to the "Economy According to Haig, Novak, et al.," he was unavailable for comment.

Philaposh proposes

What was once a Heritage Foundation proposal on cutbacks in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has now become OSHA reality, thanks to Thorne Auchter's almost-perfect implementation of their 1979 blueprint. Now Philaposh, the Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health, counters the right-wing's corporate suggestions with proposals of its own. "Revitalizing OSHA After Reagan" focuses on the administrative and regulatory changes that have made OSHA unresponsive to workers since President Reagan's takeover and makes suggestions for a "post-Reagan, worker-oriented OSHA." The report cites changes that led to OSHA's declining quality of inspections, including docking OSHA administrators merit pay when they go over the "allowable number" of citations to businesses and encouraging OSHA administrators to routinely reduce penalties to businesses by 50 percent to avoid a courtroom battle.

Philaposh, a union coalition once funded through OSHA but now primarily a labor-supported group, has been working on the proposals for more than a year. Their purpose is to "wake up the American public—the price they pay for one nuclear attack submarine could be used to increase OSHA's budget by 250 percent," said Charles Morris of Philaposh. "Philaposh is here to pick up where OSHA leaves off—unfortunately, in recent years that's been an impossible burden on our budget of \$135,000." For a copy of their 10-page proposal send \$5 to Philaposh, 5th floor, 3001 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104.

What's up, Doc?

Apparently the average American male has a high regard for science. When Stanford researcher Dr. Julian Davidson put out the call for 40 volunteers to test a new drug, more than 300 men eagerly responded. The drug, yohimbine hydrochloride, has been rumored since the '20s to be an aphrodisiac and now doses of it have excited Stanford rats. But Dr. Davidson put a damper on a rat-to-human analogy: "The drug's effects in people may be different from those seen in rats. Human sexual behavior is complicated by emotions and other such things."

—Beth Maschinot



The Civil Rights Act of 1984 would protect women's gains in sports.

Senate stalls sex bias bill

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Americans excited by the nomination of Geraldine Ferraro won't have to wait until the November elections to see if the women's vote has become a powerful force in American politics. The major civil rights bill of this Congress, the Civil Rights Act of 1984, still languishes in the Republican-controlled Senate. Backers hope to use two powerful symbols—women and the Olympics—to force passage. But they may have to overcome threatened amendments and a possible filibuster by right-wing opponents, and then may still face defeat by a possible presidential veto.

The legislation was introduced

into Congress last April by a bipartisan group after the Supreme Court's *Grove City College vs. Bell* ruling that severely limited the scope of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX is the only federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in federally assisted programs and is credited for expanding women's and girl's educational and athletic opportunities.

The Court, siding with the Reagan administration, said only the programs that received direct federal money had to comply to Title IX. In all previous administrations every program in a school being helped by government money had to comply to Title IX. Since the ruling the Department of Education has closed almost two dozen cases, including some affecting athletic departments, saying the programs did not receive direct funds.

And because of the Court's

ruling, three other significant civil rights laws protecting racial and ethnic minorities, the disabled and older Americans could also be similarly restricted and less effective in combatting discrimination.

The bill passed the House with minor amendments in June by a 375-to-32 margin, but things have not gone according to the fast-track strategy hoped for by the Senate supporters. The administration and right-wing Republican Senators Orin Hatch (R-UT), Jesse Helms (R-NC) and John East (R-NC) have managed to delay consideration of the bill in Hatch's Labor and Human Resources Committee and on the Senate floor.

Supporters recently held a Washington press conference to try to break the legislative deadlock. Using the interest in women's athletics generated by the Olympics, Ralph Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, warned that "many Americans do not realize that our civil rights laws and our future Olympic efforts are in serious jeopardy. Indeed, your [Reagan's] opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1984 poses more of a threat to America's future Olympic efforts than any other possible factor, including political boycotts."

Judy Goldsmith, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), said that by opposing the legislation, "President Reagan and the Republican Senate leadership would deny the next generation of American women the chance to compete in the Olympics."

Senate majority leader Howard Baker (R-TN), an original co-sponsor and expected 1988 presidential contender, has promised to bring the bill directly to the Senate floor in mid-September, bypassing Hatch's committee. Plans are now underway to bring Olympic athletes to the Capitol to lobby for the bill.

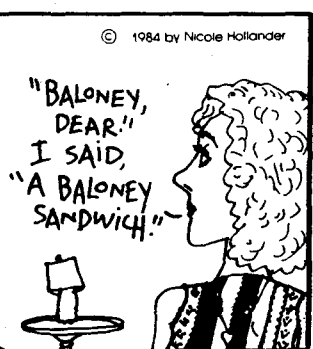
If the bill passes, one Republican House aide said that presidential approval will depend on the polls. "If he's ahead, then they'll pressure him to sign it." If the bill fails, then Democrats hope to use Reagan's opposition of it to demonstrate that the showcasing of women at the Republican convention in Dallas lacked depth. In short, they hope to show that the Republicans refuse to fulfill their promise of equal rights without a Constitutional amendment.

While many people bemoaned the commercialization of the Los Angeles Olympics, civil rights strategists now hope that if Olympic gold can be used to sell soft drinks and Xerox paper, it can also sell legislation.

—Jeffrey Menzer

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



Taxes

Continued from page 3

For example, it would reward single individuals and penalize large families that are forced to spend most of their income. (Kemp justly described a consumption tax as "anti-family.") It would also penalize the elderly who live off their savings, students living on loans and those middle-income people who spend beyond their means.

Like the current tax system, a consumption tax would reward investors regardless of what they invest in. A person who invests in commodity futures would get the same tax break as a person who funds a day-care center.

Republican rejoinders.

In response to Bradley-Gephardt and the other Democratic plans, conservative Republicans and Democrats have come forward with plans of their own. This year Kemp and Sen. Bob Kasten (R-WI) proposed a "Republican Bradley-Gephardt" that would simplify the tax code by imposing a flat 25 percent tax on all individual and corporate income.

Kemp-Kasten would preserve a semblance of progressiveness by doubling the personal exemption and allowing wage-earners who make less than \$40,000 to deduct 20 percent of their income, but it would bestow another bonanza on the rich and the corporations and would lead

to a substantial drain on the Treasury.

Other conservative proposals are less generous to the poor and the middle class than Kemp-Kasten and equally, if not more, generous to the rich. Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ), Rep. Mark Siljander and Richard Viguerie's Populist Conservative Tax Coalition are pressing for a pure flat tax. The most widely discussed proposal, devised by Hoover Institution economists Robert Hall and Alvin Rabushka, calls for a 19 percent flat tax and elimination of the corporate income tax.

In a Capitol Hill discussion on the plan, Hall admitted that it "represents in the short-run a redistribution of the tax burden from the most successful members of our economy to the middle class." But he assured his listeners that a family making \$30,000 would at worst suffer a tax increase of "only [sic] about 5 percent of their income."

Charls Walker has been pushing for a national sales tax that would either supplement or replace the income tax. Walker favors a virtually invisible form of sales tax—a Tax on Business Transactions—that would be charged in every stage of the production process except the final retail sale to a customer. When a consumer bought a car, it would already have a large federal tax bill incorporated into its final price.

Walker and other corporate tax lobbyists like the idea of a sales tax because it functions like a consumption tax—penalizing consumers and rewarding savers—and because it is less likely to encounter public opposition than an annual tax.

Their assumptions about public sentiment have been borne out by recent polls. One poll found that Americans preferred by two-to-one that any new taxes come through a sales tax rather than an income tax.

Reagan and Mondale.

Since taking office Reagan has signed one bill for an enormous tax reduction and three bills for successive, but far smaller, tax increases. He has consistently resisted committing himself to tax increases. (In 1982 he declared he could not imagine a tax increase being approved "unless there's a palace coup and I'm overtaken or overthrown.") But last winter, faced with soaring deficits through 1989, Reagan announced that he was forming a Treasury Department committee that would submit recommendations for tax reform to him by December 1 of this year.

The Treasury committee is reported to be studying four alternatives: a pure flat tax, a modified flat tax (like Kemp-Kasten), a consumption tax and a national sales tax. Administration observers expect that if Reagan is re-elected, he will propose some combination of a "simplified" and modified flat tax and a consumption tax.

But in response to Mondale's challenge Reagan has insisted that he has no plans for raising taxes in 1985 and will not do so except as a "last resort."

Reagan's response leaves Mondale with the unfortunate task of proposing his own plan for raising taxes. Last January he endorsed Bradley-Gephardt and called

for raising \$60 billion by increasing taxes on the wealthy and on corporations. But in his nomination acceptance speech Mondale promised to cut by two-thirds Reagan's projected deficit for 1989. To do this, Mondale will have to propose tax increases and spending cuts amounting to \$175 billion.

Mondale could still meet his target by cutting projected increases in the military budget and raising taxes on the corporations and well-to-do—in plugging his sales tax, Charls Walker recently warned that \$100 billion a year could be raised by placing a 45 percent surcharge on incomes above \$40,000—but it is very unlikely that Mondale will propose additional cuts in military spending or radically redistributive tax reform.

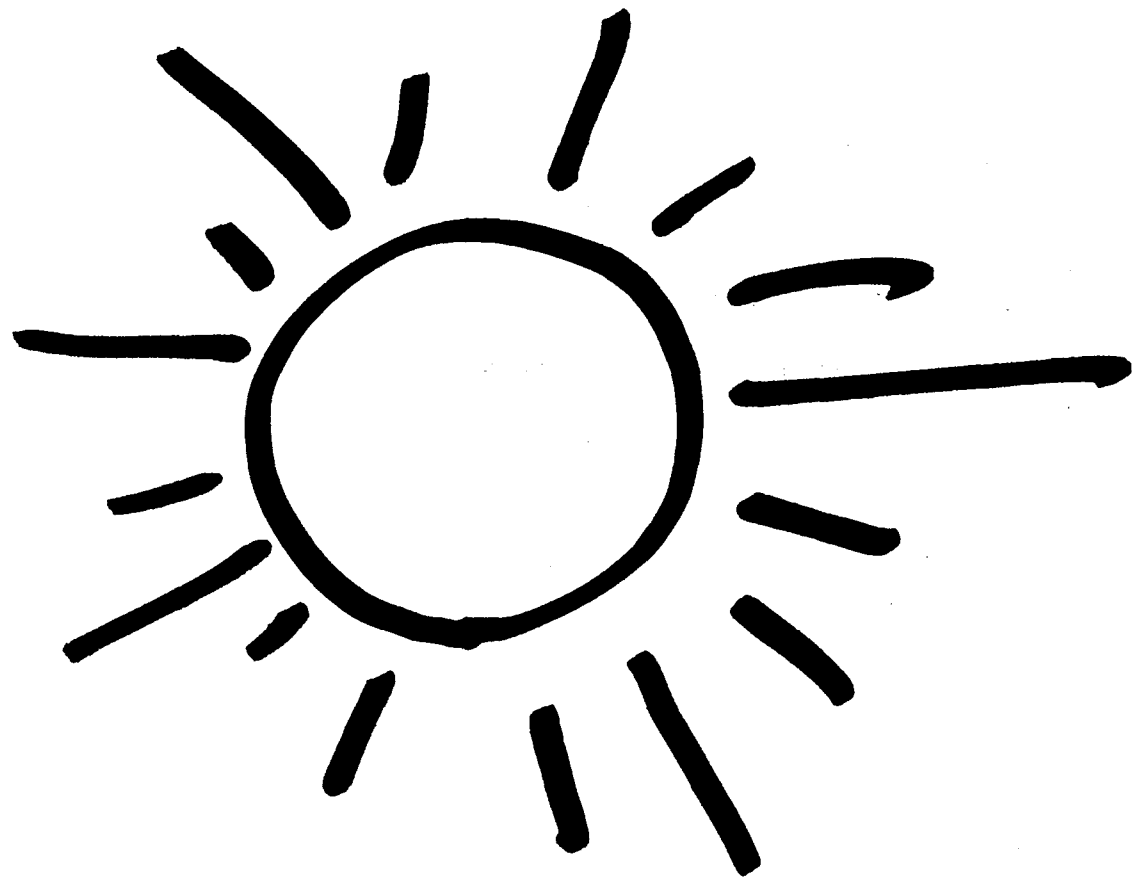
Mondale is, after all, a product of the same Democratic malaise that produced Bradley-Gephardt's "populist" tax plan and the neo-liberals' progressive consumption taxes.

The savings snare.

In 1978 Jimmy Carter did not abandon his pledge to reform the tax system because he decided that the rich deserved to keep every cent that they made. Charls Walker convinced Carter, Sen. Alan Cranston and other Democrats that the commitment to equality, built into the income tax system, had to be sacrificed in order to provide business greater savings.

To advance genuine tax reform, the Democrats must return to this bend of the road and examine the assumption that led both them and the Republicans to an impasse from which they can only seemingly escape by raising taxes. Has the stagnation of the American economy been caused by business and the wealthy having too little money at their disposal? Or has it been caused by their not being able or willing to find productive uses for the savings they do have?

Of course, the tax issue could work to the Democrats' advantage, but it will not do so as long as they simply mimic the Republicans in finding ways to divert income from spenders to savers. ■



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FOREIGN POLICY

Reagan's forthcoming hit: Terrorism on the high seas

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

SUMMER IS A GOOD TIME FOR dreaming up scenarios as one lolls on the beach or takes a turn around the ranch. And Ronald Reagan needs a full-length feature movie. Otherwise, he could become known as a stand-up comic with his one-liners about blowing up the Russians. For all his good humor, the public is fickle and the old actor risks losing at the box office to someone younger and better looking, like Geraldine Ferraro. But is there time for a big hit before November?

Anyone can play scenario. All that is needed is a collection of recent newspaper clippings and a little imagination.

In a movie starring Reagan as president of the U.S., it's obvious who the good guy is. We need a bad guy who is really bad, but sexier than the Ayatollah Khomeini. Who but Libya's leader, Colonel Moammer Khadafi? And now for the cast of thousands. Let's look through the clippings.

Here's a good opener: Marine Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, deputy chief of staff for plans, policies and operations, complains that the Soviet navy is intruding on "our turf." By "our turf" this American naval officer means nothing less than the high seas. *Captain Courageous, The Caine Mutiny, Mr. Roberts*, ...the public goes for good Navy pictures, especially with strong or picturesque characters.

And this Gen. Trainor sounds just

right. Listen to what he told a Navy War College strategy forum at Newport, R.I., in June:

"We have a legitimate right, a legitimate interest to operate on the seas of the world and touch the continents of the world. That's our lifeblood, our economic blood. This is not true for the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union is doing an unnatural act, it is leaping the barriers, it is going onto our turf."

Well, there's the problem in a nutshell. Or at least that's the practical problem: defending our turf.

In Navy movies you also need big moral problems. Here's one: the "rules of engagement" or, in other words, who gets to shoot first. In Westerns the bad guy used to shoot first, but the good guy would shoot better. Now there's a new twist. Reagan's stalwarts in the Navy are pressing for changes in the rules to allow the good guys (the Americans, of course) to shoot first—because with the new cruise missiles, there may not be anyone left to shoot second.

Or, as Reagan's Navy Secretary John F. Lehman Jr. told that Newport strategy forum, "Who gets to shoot first will have more to do with who wins than any other factor." He called the rules of engagement "the most critical national security nexus that I can think of."

Lehman is the hero who got Congress to shell out money for the biggest naval buildup in peacetime history. The *Washington Post* reported that the major thrust of the June strategy conference in Newport was defense of Lehman's "forward strategy," which calls for using air-

craft carriers to bottle up the Soviet surface and submarine fleet near its ports.

The conference was attended by other colorful sea dogs such as Vice Admiral James A. (Ace) Lyons, deputy chief of naval operations, who proudly exclaimed: "Today the Norwegian Sea is ours. We intend to keep it so." But he warned that this required properly drafted rules of engagement.

But how do you get the holdouts for the old-fashioned ways to see the light? A dramatic new conflict that shows the need to shoot first?

Defending against terrorism.

Now let's shift scenes to the Trilateral Commission meeting in Washington last April, where Secretary of State George P. Shultz worries that a purely passive strategy cannot cope with what he calls the rise of state-supported terrorism.

"When and how should we take preventive or pre-emptive action against known terrorist groups? What evidence do we insist upon before taking such steps?" Shultz muses.

"As the threat mounts, and as the involvement of such countries as Iran, Syria, Libya and North Korea has become more and more evident, then it is more and more appropriate that the nations of the West face up to the need for active defense against terrorism."

Two weeks later, talking to White House reporters, Shultz went off the record to tell them: "If we had hard information of impending terrorism, we would seriously consider taking action, pre-emptive action. This administration is not in a mood to do nothing."

He again named Libya, Iran and Syria. Asked about the possibility of concerted action against Khadafi, Shultz said he could envisage it, since "terrorism is an international problem."

Enter our leading man. On April 16, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that President Reagan had signed an important new policy directive endorsing the principle of pre-emptive strikes as well as reprisal raids against terrorists outside the U.S. This National Security Decision Directive 138 (or NSDD 138 for short) was dated April 3, 1984. A new Joint Special Operations Agency to Act Overseas was set up under the Joint Chiefs of Staff to coordinate counterterror military units in each of the three military branches. It was reported that a contingency list of potential terrorist targets overseas was being prepared for quick disruptive actions or reprisal strikes. Certain countries may be labelled "terrorist."

The *L.A. Times* added that the month before the directive, the U.S. had delivered stiff protests to the Soviet Union and the six Warsaw Pact countries against alleged state-sponsored terrorism.

Remember Claire Sterling? For a couple of years she has been repeating in books and articles the charge that Bulgaria and thus Moscow were behind the shooting of the Pope. No such thing has ever been proved, but it has been repeated so often that many people believe it must be true. Flashback to Saint Peter's square, the Pope is shot. Terrorism at its most wicked.

To prevent such a thing from happening again, the U.S. might mount a pre-emptive strike...against Moscow? Isn't that a bit much for a 90-minute movie? How about Libya instead? And how do we get our clean-cut Navy types into the war against grimy terrorists? Wait a minute.

Back to Washington in late June, at a conference on terrorism put on by the Israeli-backed Jonathan Institute, where former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin called for the establishment of a

new international organization of "governments that accept the principle of fighting terrorism" to be headed by the U.S.

This time George Shultz called on democratic nations to join against what he called an international "League of Terror" including Syria, Iran, Libya and North Korea. Shultz said that the "Soviet link" is now "clearly understood." The Soviets, he explained, "use terrorist groups" to "weaken liberal democracy and undermine world stability" in their desire to "shake the West's self-confidence and sap its will to resist aggression and intimidation." He suggested "defense through appropriate preventive or pre-emptive actions against terrorist groups before they strike."

Enough talk. Now we want action. It is the last week in July. In Los Angeles it is proved that in the absence of the Russians, the U.S. easily dominates the world. But far away, just East of Suez in the Red Sea, an explosion is heard. And then another. And another.

By August the word is out: international terrorism has gone to sea. For a couple of weeks beginning July 23, mines seem to be popping off in the Red Sea at the rate of about one a day. Egypt hastily began issuing invitations and accusations.

The invitations were to the U.S. and its principal NATO allies to come sweep the

Says George Shultz: "This administration is not in a mood to do nothing."

mines from the Red Sea. The accusations were that the mines had been laid by "terrorist states." First Egypt accused Iran and Libya, then backed away from the Iran charge and singled out Libya. Day after day, Egyptian officials announced that they were on the brink of obtaining evidence that would prove Libya's guilt.

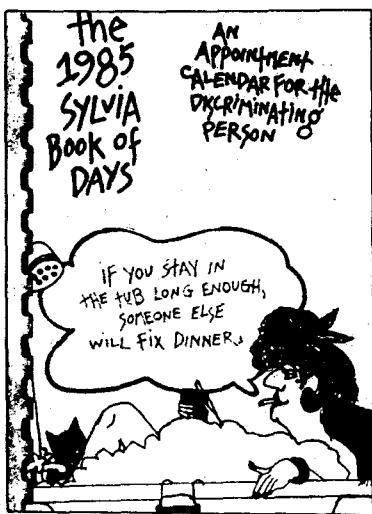
On August 15 the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronot* chimed in with a report that unidentified intelligence sources in London thought the mysterious international terrorist mine layers would next strike the port of Rotterdam. The Israeli newspaper said the mine-layers were aided by Syria, Libya and Iran, after being trained by East German and Czechoslovakian experts with Soviet backing. That pretty well covered the field.

American, British and French mine-sweepers sped to the scene. The leading powers of the free world assumed responsibility for protecting free navigation. Incidentally, a couple of Soviet freighters were damaged by the mysterious Soviet-backed international terrorist mines, but no American or Israeli ships. But that's what makes terrorists such perfect adversaries: they are so self-destructive.

Luckily, there is no such thing as bringing suit for slander or libel in international affairs. For not the slightest scrap of proof was found after two weeks of searching to link the mine-laying to Shultz's "League of Terror." Egypt said the Libyan freighter *Ghat*, which had sailed around the Red Sea a few days before the mines started popping, must be the guilty party. But then the *Ghat* was impounded in Marseilles due to a complicated shippers' dispute and thoroughly searched and inspected by French officials who found no trace of any mine-laying capacity.

While the international shark hunt was getting underway in the Red Sea, another conflict was going on about another kind of deep-sea mining—the extraction of mineral nodules from the ocean floor. A top priority effort of the Reagan administration is to scuttle the Law of the Sea Convention on deep sea mining that would oblige U.S. mining companies to follow internationally recognized rules and share the loot with the whole pack of poor varmits who inhabit the United Na-

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The *International Herald Tribune* reported on August 20 that the U.S. was lobbying hard in West European capitals to get its allies, and especially West Germany, not to sign the Law of the Sea Convention. The Law of the Sea would get in the way of turning the oceans into a new Wild West, where Uncle Sam, riding tall in the saddle, could proclaim it all "our turf."

Searching for villains.

But to keep cattle rustlers and claim jumpers off the ranch, Uncle Sam has to be able to put on his sheriff's badge from time to time and lead a posse. So it was lucky, in a way, that the Red Sea explosions gave the Reagan administration a chance to lead its most faithful sidekicks—Britain, France and Italy (the same ones who went along to get shot at in Lebanon)—in a search for villains, now known as "international terrorists." It was also a good trial run before the much-anticipated operations in the Persian-Arabian Gulf.

Speaking of Arabs, the leading Gulf newspaper, *Al Khalif*, said the U.S. had probably mined the Red Sea itself "to increase its military presence in the area." This was the prevailing opinion in the Arab world and notably in the Egyptian left, where American experience in mining (Haiphong, Nicaragua) was noted, as well as the easy access to the Red Sea of special units operating out of Israeli ports on the Gulf of Aqaba. But this gets too complicated and better end up on the cutting room floor.

Instead, let's have a little comic relief—from the Italians, of course. They are a special breed. Italians don't even like the idea of getting involved in a way in which Italians would all be killed. That's always good for a laugh.

Italy's Socialist Prime Minister Bettino Craxi knew his lines and pledged Italian support against the "bandit action of international terrorism" in the Red Sea. He was supported by the country's main newspapers, which editorialized that Moslem fanatics, by mining the routes that carry petroleum to Italian FIATs, were carrying out terrorist attacks on "our weekends, our vacations."

Craxi hopes to succeed Sandro Pertini as Italy's next president now that old Pertini's moral prestige has helped prepare Italian public opinion for a strong presidency. Craxi needs American backing.

Italy's Christian Democratic Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti has somewhat different, if complex, concerns—one being to preserve Italy's foreign relations. So he took a different line. He said he had no reason to believe that Libya was responsible for the mining, and that moreover he could not see how it would be in Libya's interest. He recalled that Khadafi used to be accused of being behind the Red Brigades by people who overlooked the fact that the Red Brigades "hated Khadafi."

"These are bombs of unknown paternity," said Andreotti. "It is well known that presumed paternity does not always correspond to reality. Faced with such grave international matters, it is always necessary to be wary of reports often put into circulation in order to cover the tracks of certain responsible parties...."

The Italian left opposition objected that Egypt should go to the UN for help against the mines rather than call in the leading NATO states. More cutting room floor stuff.

The last word was surely with the Republican Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini and Italy's naval officers, who were enraptured with the chance to sail to the Red Sea. They saw a chance to enhance the importance of their branch and get a greater share (now only 22 percent) of the Italian military budget. Italian soldiers in Lebanon, by endearing themselves to the local population (in contrast to the Americans and French), greatly boosted the army's popularity in Italy.

"The Lebanon effect has been contagious for everybody," observed Falco Accame, a former naval officer who used to head the defense committee of the Italian parliament. The mine-sweeping opera-

tion is "a great opportunity to influence public opinion and get big appropriations through parliament," he said.

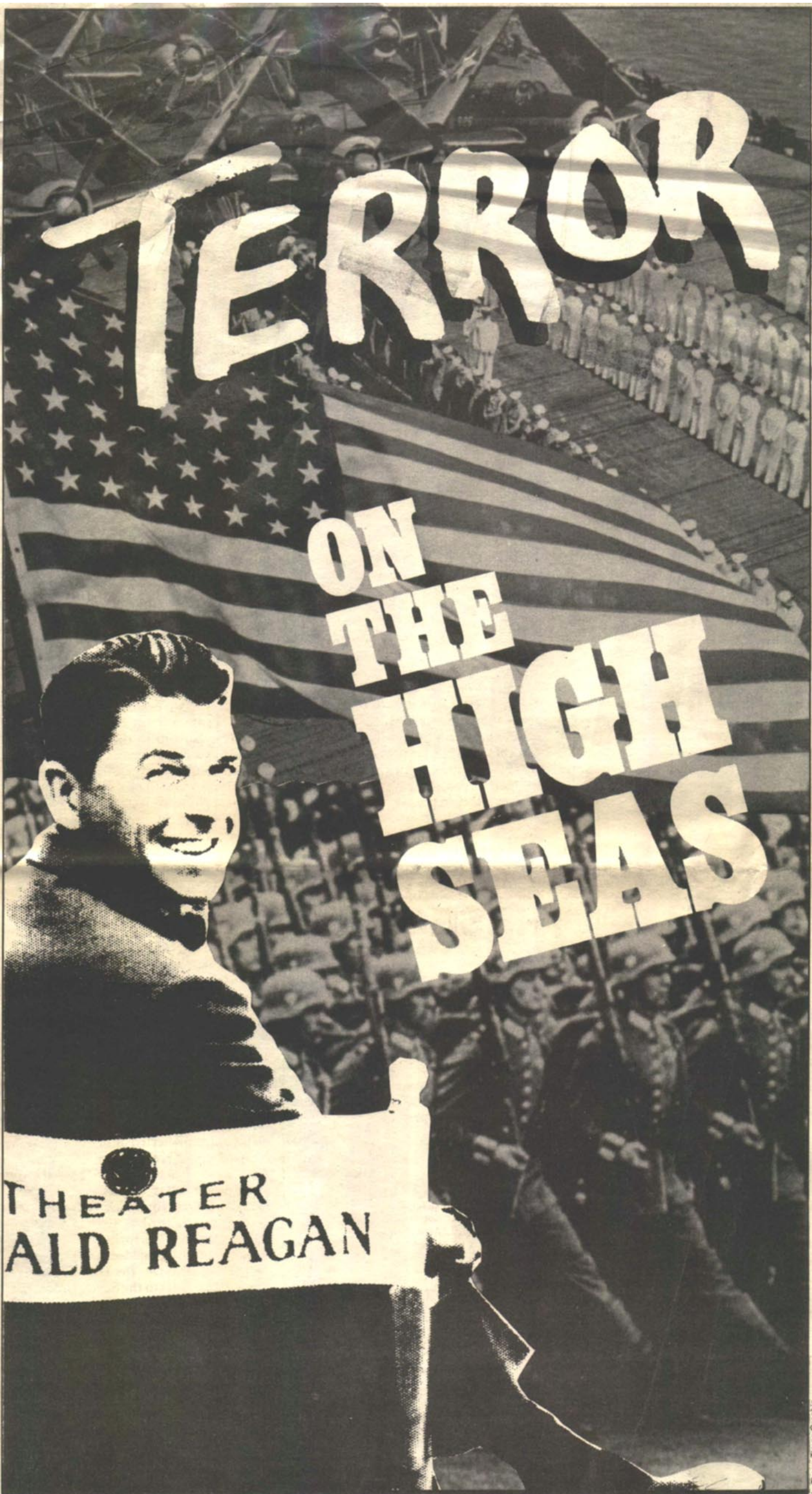
The weekly *Panorama* reported: "Behind the admirals and captains is another lobby which is putting pressure.... It's the Italian arms industry, both state and private owned." This is "a billion-dollar business based on an elementary principle: the navy acquires Italian products and, by parading them over the seas, gives them excellent publicity. Thus the industries can export them with great fac-

ility." For every *lira* spent by the Italian navy on ship purchases, the ship-building industries can expect to earn four *lira* by selling abroad, especially to Arab countries.

But time is running out, and our scenario is not yet completed. For that let's turn to the talents of novelists Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, experts (along with Claire Sterling and Michael Ledeen) in "international terrorism," who last year began an expensive private newsletter called "Early Warning" that

regales its readers (who reportedly include CIA Director William Casey and Wyoming Republican Sen. Malcolm Wallop) with what purports to be inside predictions of the forces of evil's next moves. Perhaps they have some ideas as to where "pre-emptive strikes against international terrorism" should be struck. This could be Reagan's big hit.

A last question. If for some reason or another our favorite leading man is not available, could Walter Mondale play the role?



TOM GALLAGHER

Even in real politics there's another way to look at things

By Joan Walsh

BOSTON

BOSTON COLLEGE TAUGHT Massachusetts Rep. Tom Gallagher (D-Allston-Brighton) a lot about how to espouse unpopular causes in a popular way. Back in 1966, when Vice President Hubert Humphrey couldn't come near a college campus without being heckled or worse, his advance men turned to BC, a conservative Irish Catholic College where no visible student movement existed. They scheduled a speech there, and though the vice president faced demonstrators, all but a handful came from off campus. The BC students heckled the demonstrators.

Freshman Gallagher showed up for Humphrey's speech and wound up joining the protesters. "I had to defend that decision in the dorms all year," he recalls. He went on to help organize anti-war groups at the college, but they didn't look much like the movement on other campuses. Active in the Catholic Peace Fellowship, he helped found an SDS chapter, and the two groups actually merged for a year. Another center of opposition to the war was the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary ("Think back to your parochial school days," he told me), a social justice group that attracted concerned students and faculty. "We did very Catholic things—fasts, silent vigils, teach-ins," Gallagher recalls. "That's where I learned you have to reach people where they are."

That lesson has stood Gallagher through years of community organizing and two terms in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The *Boston Globe* recently named him "Business' Public Enemy No. 1," but the label, while indicating Gallagher's political agenda, implies an enmity that is not apparent on either side.

"The amazing thing about Tom is that he's not considered a one-issue, strident guy. People like him," says one longtime Boston political observer. "But anyway, the 'Business Enemy' label didn't hurt him—it may even have helped him." This year Gallagher, 35, is seeking re-election to a third term in the House, opposed by the man he defeated in 1980, 69-year-old John Melia, in a primary match he's favored to win easily.

The big question mark in Gallagher's political future is the race for Boston's 8th Congressional District in 1986, should House Speaker Tip O'Neill make good his statement that he would like to retire after another term. The race is currently considered a free-for-all, with as many as 12 possible Democratic contenders (including a young Kennedy, a Roosevelt and an O'Neill).

But among the "always mentioned" candidates in political columns and gossip is Tom Gallagher, who let it be known early that he was sizing up the district for a shot at the seat. The evaluation process continues, and Gallagher is still serious. Which people take seriously, because though he is an open socialist known for adhering to his principles and ideas, he doesn't use the electoral process just to debate principles and ideas. He uses it to get elected.

Gallagher first ran for the House in 1978, when Melia, who in this race seems unhappily retired and a little pathetic, was a 15-year incumbent tied to Mayor Kevin White's machine. He looked invulnerable to many, but not to Gallagher. "He'd voted against things polls said the district favored—a state ERA, the bottle bill. I thought he could be beaten."

Gallagher had strong ties to Boston's left and labor communities through his work at Boston Community School, a center of political education for left unionists and people active in Massachusetts Fair Share and tenants groups. Gal-



lagher taught classes on socialism in the U.S. at the school and went on to become director. The school became a base for his house candidacy. "It helped me consolidate my support. There were people I worked with there and could call on in a campaign," Gallagher says. "They were skeptical to a one, but excited too."

He lost to Melia by 300 votes, but the campaign barely broke stride before gearing up for a rematch in the 1980 election. In the second race Gallagher had 300 volunteers working the district's 13,000 registered voters. Tenants were attracted by his support for rent control and condo-conversion legislation. Labor came out for his commitment to lead the fight for plant closing legislation. Senior citizens, a major district constituency, appreciated his concern for their economic problems, as well as his personal appearances in their neighborhoods and nursing homes. And women's groups supported his stands in favor of the ERA and choice.

"Socialism was never an issue in the campaign," recalls Gallagher, who was a prominent member of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and remains active in the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). "Abortion was much more of a problem."

But the grassroots effort paid off. Melia won 2,230 votes, about the same as he'd earned in 1978. But Gallagher added another 1,000 votes to his previous total and won a decisive 57 percent of the vote. He upped his winning total to 66 percent in 1982, helped by the state AFL-CIO, which made him one of three legislators targeted for special help in that election. Ironically, he won that distinction despite a dismal AFL-CIO vote rating that year—more than half the votes charted had to do with the bottle bill, which labor opposed but Gallagher favored.

That ability to differ occasionally with labor and other constituencies but maintain their support is key to Gallagher's politics. He sees himself as a bridge between "suburban liberals" and "urban populists," trying to show those important Democratic constituencies where their interests converge. "It's important that I don't step into either pre-formed category, trading votes the way most legislators do. Here people are usually able to say, 'All those people who are for unions—they'll live with an undemocratic legislature, they won't fight for rules reform.' Or, 'All those people who care about clean streams—they don't care about jobs.' I've tried to keep all those issues separate, to vote right on each of them."

In any case, a difference of opinion on the bottle bill couldn't negate labor's debt to Gallagher for his crusade on behalf of plant closing legislation. What began as a quixotic-seeming proposal became a bill co-sponsored by 92 of 160 House members that was given a good chance of passage this year. Gallagher's success in drumming up support for the bill, which would have required a business closing down operations to give workers advance notice and severance pay, pushed Gov. Michael Dukakis to establish a Commission on Mature Industries to take an overview on the problems of Massachusetts' declining manufacturing sector.

The commission's recommendations included a plant closing resolution with far less muscle than Gallagher's bill—it wound up even getting the support of business, which had stridently fought Gallagher's measure. Despite its majority support in the House, Gallagher's bill never made it out of committee; the commission's measure did.

"I thought a lot about what to do in that situation," Gallagher recalls. "Do I back the compromise, say it's even better than the original bill, like a legislator in that position is supposed to? I couldn't do that—it wasn't better."

For one thing, the bill only provides for "voluntary" prior notification of a plant shutdown. "On the other hand, I

couldn't say it's worse than the status quo—it's not." The bill did establish a supplementary insurance compensation fund for workers who lose jobs in plant closings without prior notice. In the end, Gallagher supported the compromise, but wasn't shy about noting its shortcomings.

Gallagher's association with the plant closing fight did more than consolidate his labor support—it earned him a platform from which to battle business on several fronts. In newspaper opinion pages and public forums, he has begun to articulate a common sense, popular response to the business arguments that have long carried the day in state government. When industry spokesmen assail public interest legislation for worsening the state's "business climate," it's Gallagher who finds the holes in their arguments.

When Howard Foley, chair of Massachusetts High Technology Council, warned at a public forum that passing a plant closing bill in the state would force business "to locate its new plants in a state such as New Hampshire," Gallagher pointed out that New Hampshire practices industry's other bogey, unitary apportionment taxation, taxing out-of-state corporate subsidiaries. And when Auquiat, Inc., a high-tech firm, shifted a 100-job plant expansion north to Maine, claiming opposition to Massachusetts' unitary tax code, Gallagher publicly noted that Maine is the only state with a plant-closing law. (Earlier in the year, Auquiat announced the Maine move to the Dukakis administration and claimed it was spurred by new state "right to know" legislation.)

Gallagher's current crusade is against Dukakis' MassBank proposal, a plan that would abolish the unitary tax while increasing certain business taxes and earmarking those new revenues for infrastructure repair. Gallagher favors the directed tax notion, but points out that the tradeoff will hurt smaller businesses that operate only in Massachusetts while relieving the tax burden of corporate entities with out-of-state subsidiaries. He makes political life miserable for Dukakis' revenue commissioner, publicizing the bureaucrat's past praise of unitary taxation as "the best that reasonable men and women have been able to come up with"—words he'd like to have back now that MassBank is the administration's tax initiative.

"Dukakis likes to boast that he governs by consensus," Gallagher notes. "But I think that's undemocratic, when it involves balancing the interests of a few—business leaders—with the interests of the many. The administration just has no will to fight them on these questions."

While Gallagher's reasoning is by no means in danger of becoming a majority position in the state legislature, it is at least treated as a reasonable point of view, within the realm of acceptable political discourse. And that's no small feat for a socialist legislator. By most accounts Gallagher's political affiliations have never been a prominent issue, either in his political campaigns or debates over his legislative agenda.

"I don't think that many people in the state house are even aware that Tom's a socialist," says DSA member Jim Marzilli, who worked for House Speaker Thomas McGee until last year, when he was fired, Marzilli says, for being "too socialistic and being seen in a coffee house with an enemy of the speaker." The unnamed "enemy" is widely thought to be Gallagher, who despite his politics had a friendly relationship with McGee until he backed Rep. George Kevarian's leadership challenge. (Marzilli has brought suit against the legislature on First Amendment grounds.)

By his own account, Gallagher works for a careful balance between hiding his socialist politics and trumpeting them. "I

don't campaign saying, 'Hi, I'm a socialist,'" he says. "But I made a decision before my first race that as a matter of intellectual honesty I would acknowledge I was a socialist if asked, because I felt it privately. But I've never made it part of my campaign in such a way that I would have to explain socialism for a half hour at someone's front door. In day-to-day politics the word is not a useful thing, because there is really no national organization to point to, to say, 'There, I'm like that.' But if I have someone's ear, and some time, and we're talking about what government really is, I'll take it up because I think I can convince them that there's another way of looking at things."

He has been a fairly high-profile DSA member, welcoming its endorsement and its members in his campaigns, speaking at its meetings. By contrast, a former Boston DSA president, John McDonough, decided to refuse the group's public endorsement in running for the state house (in a district considered more conservative than Gallagher's).

But in a congressional race, should O'Neill not seek another term, DSA support could be a contested commodity. State Sen. George Bachrach, whose senate district includes most of Gallagher's house turf, joined DSA this year in preparation for a serious look at his own chances to succeed O'Neill. Bachrach, with a solid liberal voting record and a reputation for challenging the state senate leadership, was the featured speaker at a Boston DSA dinner earlier this year, an honor that gave the Gallagher camp a political shock and raised rumors of a potential split in DSA ranks should both men wind up in the congressional race. But most Boston DSA members are Gallagher loyalists, and no one interviewed thought Bachrach a serious threat to his claim on the endorsement.

Right now Gallagher's plan is to let his hard-core supporters on the left and in the labor movement know he is serious

If Tip O'Neill makes good on his decision to retire in '86, Gallagher, Boston's socialist state legislator, will probably make a bid to replace him.

about a congressional run, and hold on to them while he sizes up his potential base. He enjoys close ties to the Ray Flynn administration, despite remaining neutral in Flynn's race against black socialist Mel King last year. That was a politically and personally difficult decision for Gallagher; politically, he had grown close to Flynn through the mayor's transformation from South Boston anti-busing grandstander to a working-class populist, and personally, Gallagher's best friend and former campaign manager Ray Dooley was running Flynn's bid. But King had been a political ally in the state legislature and was the first public official to endorse Gallagher's house candidacy.

"I would hope never to face that situation again, although it was a great position for the left," Gallagher says. But so far the political damage from neutrality has been minimal. Flynn recently co-

sponsored Gallagher's first \$50-a-person fundraiser, and while it is too early to get reliable predictions on the Flynn camp's role in a congressional race, individuals within it have maintained close ties to Gallagher. King would likely endorse State Rep. Sandra Graham, a black woman on the legislature's left wing who has expressed interest in the contest.

But labor is the cornerstone of Gallagher's congressional hopes. If he can't expect reasonably solid support from unions, he can't expect to win. And if he can't expect to win, he won't run. Right now Gallagher's legislative record would seem to put him out in front of most of the other "always mentioned" contenders.

"He has earned tremendous labor support and it's fairly broad based—in the industrial unions and building trades as well as the service sector," says Nancy Mills, president of the Service Employees International Union Local 285. "He's been out front on issues of importance to all of our constituencies."

That support can't directly be translated to mean a congressional endorsement, however. Mills predicts one critical factor will be whether O'Neill endorses one of his would-be successors. "If Tip made it clear who he'd want in that position, it would be very hard for labor to go against his wishes. We know we have a friend in Tom, but O'Neill has also been quite a friend of ours."

George Carpenter, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO, downplays O'Neill's potential role. He sees the state federation staying neutral in a primary battle. "I'm sure you won't find us involved in that. You've got three big names in the race right now—[State Sen.] Mike LoPresti, George Bachrach and Tom. They're all good candidates for labor. It just doesn't serve the interests of working people to choose between three candidates who have about 90 percent [labor] voting records—you're just going to make enemies."

In a field too crowded with Democrats for decisive endorsements, most observers think Gallagher could be a competitive candidate. "Then it comes down to hard work and good organization, and Tom can do both," says Mills.

Notes Mike Schippani, a longtime Gallagher friend who works for the state Secretary of Labor: "Because of the district's constituency, if someone stakes out clear, progressive stands on issues and has a history of working on them, people are likely to pay attention to the issues, and not money, personality or media. Tom is in a position to do that, because of who he is, because of his stands on working-class, economic issues."

Gallagher shares that assessment. He's optimistic about the electoral fortunes of the left, both in his own district and nationally. The presidential primary battle, dreary and grueling in its way, "confirmed two articles of faith for the left," he believes. "One, we've always said that the Democrats could broaden the party by discussing left issues, and Jackson certainly did it. Two, we believe that our foreign policy could unify the party and attract people, and McGovern's candidacy did that."

Gallagher was the only elected official who went to San Francisco committed to McGovern, and he stayed committed. As McGovern's platform committee representative he got two of his own initiatives into the document—a call for plant closure notification and government financial help for worker-owned cooperatives.

"I think people have an intuitive view that there's enough wealth in this country that there don't have to be areas of the city, poor areas, where they can't even travel. They know that there don't have to be continuous wars," he says. "I believe people in the party would go for something better than they're offered."

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

IN THE DIALOG

PLEASE PERMIT ME TO JOIN YOUR dialog with DSA. Your criticism (Editorial, *ITT*, Aug. 8) was due a long time and may benefit all.

DSA has a good record of working within mass organizations, but that is due mainly to local initiative. The national leadership is failing to carry out the job for which it was created, to build a popular socialist movement. There is no national DSA campaign. DSA fails to separate itself and delineate itself from other organizations.

There are multitudes of political dissidents who do not belong to DSA. The criticism of DSA on national issues is also made by non-socialists, so why should they join DSA?

There are a whole series of problems, economic, political and international, discussed but not developed into programs.

Long term plans and reforms have always been the province of individuals and minority groups. Problems are discerned, registered and monitored until

they arouse popular interest and action. That should be practical socialist politics.

DSA must obtain approval for changes we offer. How can it be done if DSA does not propose solutions to problems? How can we build a mass movement if we have no national issues to contend for?

I have written on the same subject to DSA, quite a while back, but, as a mere rank-and-file member, was ignored.

—Leon Blum
Plantation, Fla.

DECKER DECKED HERSELF?

IN THE NAME OF OBJECTIVE JOURNALISM, will *In These Times* please breach the virtual blackout whereby the American news media have either shied away from, or obfuscated, any adverse comment on an American athlete's culpability in one of the most disgraceful episodes in international competition?

When, in the Olympic 3,000-meter final, the experienced Mary Decker (26) fell off the track after twice nearly trip-

ping up Zola Budd (18), hypernationalistic American sports commentators, athletes and spectators came down on the dejected and physically injured (spiked Achilles tendon) Budd like vultures on a wounded animal. But later, the most exacting official examination of "super-slo-mo" reruns of the incident revealed that not for an instant had poor Zola been at fault.

After the race, Swiss runner Cornelia Buerki told officials that from her clear view from behind it was Decker's fault. "She tried to get inside of Zola. She hit Zola in the Achilles tendon. It was not Zola's fault. She was in front."

Later, interviewed on TV in London, British gold medalist Sebastian Coe unequivocally averred: "From a trackman's point of view, I felt that Mary Decker got a lot of what she deserved. She ran up behind Zola and caught her three times in seven strides."

And may I add that I personally, with half a lifetime's participation in sports behind me, had never before witnessed so flagrant a case of spiking and tripping.

What, then, is the truth of the matter? Does it not appear obvious that oh-so-sweet Mary Decker decked herself?

—D.D. Howard-Ady
Ojai, Calif.

THERE'S MORE TO WATER THAN WHAT YOU DRINK

THE SAFETY OF DRINKING WATER IS of much concern. Even the cleanest municipal water supplies come out of the faucet containing significant levels of organic chemicals, metals and other contaminants—many of which may cause cancer, mutations or birth deformities. Governmental regulation of drinking water supplies has been meager, but the validity even of that minimal level of public protection has been seriously questioned by health officials with the Massachusetts state Department of Environmental Quality Engineering.

In the May issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, the investigators take issue with the basic assumptions behind the governments Suggested No Adverse Response Levels, or SNARLs. SNARLs are recommendations put forth by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for maximum allowable concentrations of toxic chemicals in water for adults who consume two liters of water per day (or children who consume one liter). The assumption in SNARLs that ingestion of water constitutes the major, if not the only route for toxic chemicals to gain access to the body is the investigators' central concern.

Though acknowledging that drinking of drinking water plays a significant role in determining an individual's exposure to a toxic substance, the authors point out that the skin also constitutes a route—perhaps the major one—of exposure to chemicals in the drinking water. The skin route of exposure accounted for 29 to 91 percent—with an average of 64 percent—of the total dose received by an individual of compounds that were looked at in the study: toluene, ethylbenzene and styrene. Although not reviewed by the authors, toxics like benzene, carbon tetrachloride, vinyl chloride and trichloroethylene are commonly found in surveys of drinking water supplies done by the EPA.

The findings indicate that, at the very least, SNARLs which themselves are legally only recommended levels, have little validity, especially when it comes to the actual conditions of exposure to drinking water. In addition, coming close on the heels of the current focus in the environmental health field on indoor air pollution as constituting the major route of exposure to airborne pollutants, the evidence gathered by the authors points further to the inability of scientists and government at the highest levels to deal seriously with toxic compounds and to protect the people from health hazards in their environment.

—Joseph V. Regna
Medford, Mass.

ASBESTOS

I WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED IN *IN THESE Times*' coverage of the OSHA asbestos hearings (In Short, *ITT*, July 25). The article seemed to imply that the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) was the only union involved in the hearings and represents the majority of asbestos exposed workers. ACTWU has played an important role in the hearings, but the main union representatives at the hearings were from the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD) of the AFL-CIO. Construction workers, who are exposed to asbestos doing maintenance, repair, renovation, removal and demolition work, are by far the largest group of workers exposed. An estimated 4.5 million construction workers are represented by the BCTD, most of whom are exposed to asbestos on the job. Of the estimated 9,000 workers who will die this year from asbestos related cancer, half will be either construction or shipyard workers.

One of the major issues of the hearing was the need for a separate standard for the construction industry. Thus far OSHA has refused to deal with the unique nature of the construction industry and has never put out a health standard designed to deal with those workers' exposures. After nine months of work, the BCTD developed a specific proposal for a separate standard and garnered strong support for it at the hearing.

—Scott Schneider
Takoma Park, Md.

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By Jo Freeman

This is the final installment in a three-part series on pay equity.

WHILE ACADEMICS and politicians are arguing the merits of comparable worth in Washington, it is being legislated, litigated and bargained for in the states. The first law suit was filed by the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE) in 1970. The first job evaluation study specifically designed to test for wage disparities

sex was added to Title VII during floor debates in 1964 a special exemption permitted employers to differentiate wages by sex where authorized by EPA.

As a result, the courts dismissed most cases claiming that predominantly female jobs were paid less than predominantly male ones if the jobs were not substantially equal but only equivalent in skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. Such cases were won only when women could show that the wage disparities were intentional. This was true even though Title VII generally does not require proof of discriminatory intent. Many of the sex-based wage discrimina-

Dixie Lee Ray, despite a budget surplus that year. The legislature took no further action until the AFSCME suit was filed, when it set up a 10-year implementation plan. The judge found this to be too little, too late. He ordered the state to implement pay equity immediately, and to pay the employees it had short-changed (10 percent of whom are men) several hundred million dollars in back pay.

The size of the award has frightened

In contrast to the state of Washington, the state of Minnesota is held out as the right way to respond to pay equity demands. In 1981 the Minnesota Commission on the Economic Status of Women created a pay equity task force of legislators, labor, management and the general public to put out a report estimating the undervaluation of predominantly female jobs based on a previous study by an outside consultant. The following year the legislature appropriated \$22 million for initial pay equity adjustments. More than 8,000 employees received adjustments—some as high as \$1,600—in addition to an 8.5 percent general increase. The legislature also changed the state personnel law to make pay equity a primary policy and to compel local governments to implement it.

Since 1974 more than a dozen states and dozens of local jurisdictions have mandated comparable worth studies and several have passed laws to add it to their equal pay acts or incorporate it into their public employee wage policies. Some of these studies, such as that in New York, are elaborate. However, only Minnesota, Washington, New Mexico and Connecticut, and several cities, have actually allocated money to eliminate wage disparities. Washington did so under threat of a law suit and Connecticut has been sued by AFSCME because the amount it allocated was inadequate.

In jurisdictions that permit public employee unions to participate in wage setting, authorization of the studies and implementation of their findings is usually done through a combination of collective bargaining and legislation. In other jurisdictions, political pressure has been the key ingredient. This political pressure has largely been a consequence of the increasing numbers of women state legislators and the increasing sophistication of women's organizations, some of it gained through ERA struggles.

At the Forum for Women State Legislators in San Diego last December workshops on pay equity had twice the attendance of any other. Women legislators from 10 states asked for model bills to take home with them. The women's network of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) engineered passage of a resolution supporting pay equity by the NCSL a couple of years ago. There has been some sort of pay equity activity in at least 40 states and 52 municipalities. Nonetheless, one member of this network told a NCSL workshop last December that "this is only the beginning. Comparable worth is about to explode in the states."

Jo Freeman is a Washington-based attorney.

Unions push pay equity fight



between predominantly male and female jobs was conducted by the state of Washington in 1974. This study became the model for numerous others by state and local government units at the urging of public workers' unions and women's organizations. But it has not been the model for implementation.

The tipping point for activity on comparable worth was in 1981. Before that there was some question as to whether sex-based wage discrimination claims under Title VII—which prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, religion or national origin—were limited by the requirement of the 1963 Equal Pay Act (EPA) that the work be substantially equal. As originally proposed in 1945, the EPA required that work be comparable, but it was narrowed in 1962 to make passage possible. When

tion cases filed prior to 1981 were settled out of court because there was a long history of intentional wage discrimination.

On June 8, 1981, the Supreme Court declared that Title VII was broader than the Equal Pay Act. But it made a point of stating it was ruling only on the question of scope and not "on the controversial concept of 'comparable worth.'" Thus it is not surprising that the state of Washington appealed the decision by a district judge last fall that the state violated Title VII when it failed to remove wage disparities between predominantly female and male jobs uncovered by its own studies.

Striking against inequity.

1981 also saw the first strikes over comparable worth. That July city employees in San Jose, Calif., went on strike for nine days after four years of unsuccessful efforts to obtain pay equity. A job evaluation study showed the workforce to be heavily sex segregated with an 18 percent difference in wages for equivalent jobs where 70 percent of the occupants were either men or women. The employees' union (AFSCME) was unable to reach a settlement with the city even though San Jose had a woman mayor and a majority of women on the city council. The strike ended when the city agreed to provide \$1.5 million for wage adjustments of 5-15 percent over a two-year period in addition to the 15.5 percent across the board pay raise.

Going on strike was not a viable option in Washington state, so the following year AFSCME filed suit. The 1974 study had been initiated by Gov. Dan Evans at the request of the Washington Federation of State Employees. It was updated three times, with each investigation revealing more sex segregation and wage discrimination. Evans' last budget request before leaving office included \$7 million to begin implementing the results of the studies, but it was deleted by his successor,

many state legislators. At an annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures last December several participants said that their states would be reluctant to conduct studies out of fear that they would be obligated to expend millions of dollars they might not have to remove sex-based wage disparities. AFSCME and other proponents counter that the size of the award was largely for back pay, not implementation per se. AFSCME contends that there would be no lawsuits, and hence no back pay awards, if states would act "reasonably and responsibly" to bring the wages of women's jobs in line with men's.

In jurisdictions that permit public employee unions to participate in wage setting, they have pressed for comparable worth studies.

PERSPECTIVES

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Double Exposure: Women's Health Hazards on the Job and at Home
Edited by Wendy Chavkin, M.D.
Monthly Review Press,
275 pp., \$10

By Miriam Frank

When he campaigned for the presidency in 1980, Ronald Reagan let it be known that one of his administration's first strikes against labor would be a very tight curb on the work of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). As far as textile industrialists, asbestos manufacturers and other operators of dangerous workplaces were concerned, OSHA had been a major threat to their profits.

Its policies in the late '70s included speedy shop floor inspections with enforcement of standards; its new research, media and education programs enabled public health and labor relations schools—not to mention unions themselves—to train an entire generation of knowledgeable scientists.

Today, OSHA still operates, though barely. Gone are the regulations that so irritatingly infringed on managerial prerogatives. Yet, even with minimal funding, the COSH groups—local coalitions of professionals, union activists and community organizers—have managed to eke out some valuable health and safety reforms.

The tenacity of the occupational safety and health movement may prove to be especially important for the 43 million American workers who are women. Only 16 percent of them are union members, and while enforcement of health standards is made far more difficult by the lack of union contracts, the issue—along with pay equity, child care and dignity on the job—is a potent organizing issue.

Health issues have been critical for the current women's movement. The delivery of health care was profoundly challenged by local and national campaigns for reproductive rights, "know your body" courses, self-help clinics and consumer alerts on such dangerous devices and drugs as the Dalkon Shield and DES (diethylstilbesterol).

Can a common ground for the women's movement and the labor movement be found in the occupational health and safety movement? Wendy Chavkin, in her introduction to the anthology *Double Exposure: Women's Health Hazards on the Job and at Home*, discusses the value of such an alliance. A beleaguered labor movement has been hard pressed to maintain contract standards and membership even in its traditional male occupational strongholds and continues to struggle with organizing women. And the repressive policies of Reagan's administration have made it increasingly difficult for feminists to do much more than to hang on to gains already won.

Ripe for organizing.

The first part of *Double Exposure* addresses the potential for organizing between the women's and labor movement by examining nursing, office work, microchip manufacturing and farm work—a few areas in the female job ghetto where low wages, poor advancement opportunities and hazardous substances have made women's occupations ripe for union activism. Although many industries are not mentioned—dry cleaning, canning, textile or waitressing, for example—the conditions analyzed are similar.

The most dramatic example of the value of occupational safety and health issues for unionizing women can be found in the clerical organization campaigns ad-

vanced by groups like District 925 of the Service Employees International Union. Working together with COSH task forces, office workers' unions have made some important gains.

In her analysis of the hazards of video display terminals (VDTs) Mary Sue Henifin reports on the immediate dangers of eyestrain and upper body muscle cramping as well as the unknown consequences of long-term exposure to "low level" radiation. Indeed, during the first decade of word processing technology, terminal operators functioned as *de facto* guinea pigs. Newer computers seem to be "safer," but improvement has been gradual. Even the seemingly pleasant atmosphere of a modern air conditioned office can develop, over a full work week, what Chavkin calls "closed office building syndrome," with harmful gases from business machines recirculating throughout an unventilated work space.

Stress as an emotional and physiological syndrome is an important women's health issue in the workplace. Nursing, for example, drives talented and dedicated women to dangerous extremes of emotional exhaustion. Linda Coleman and Cindy Dickinson describe how exploitive hospital administrations compound these sickening pressures in the management of hospital jobs.

In her exploration of stress and the occupational health of minority women, Leith Mullings addresses the double day of many Afro-American women who are the sole supporters of their families. With 30 percent of them employed in poorly paid, more industrialized sectors of the clerical field—key-punch operators, telephone clerks and the like—high blood pressure and ulcers can result from job pressures as well as from such economic sur-

vival factors as inadequate health benefits, rising food and housing costs or lack of child care.

An understanding of the affect of stress on women's survival in the workforce is central to Peggy Crull's original research on sexual harassment. This issue has been debated in the trade union and women's movement for at least a decade. It remains both elusive and outrageous; hard to prove, yet, as Crull demonstrates, extremely costly to those women whose work lives are forever spoiled by its effects. It is one occupational hazard all women are vulnerable to, whether they are working in traditional or non-traditional jobs.

Can unions deal appropriately with sexual harassment? It is significant that many of the effective contract reforms outlined by Crull have come about when feminist and union groups have acted in coalition. A health and safety perspective on sexual harassment clarifies an understanding of job stress, combined with feminist insights on male-female power relations to work out new strategies for organizing women workers.

Pregnant or not.

In the section "Damned If You Do; Damned If You Don't" writers discuss the complex issues of reproduction and women's work. In an earlier chapter, Alice Kessler-Harris carefully examined how the controversy over protective legislation was important through the early 20th century women's union movement, splitting female night shift workers from feminist reformers and equal rights advocates from trade union supporters.

Then as now, women's childbearing functions are at the center of the debate. Some companies have used fertility-threatening substances and then blackmailed their female employees into sterilizations. In a trenchant review of corporate policy and reproductive rights, Judith Scott describes the contradictions of these policies. "The basic policy dispute," she writes, "centers on whether to clear out the worker or clean up the workplace." Industrialists really worry more about paying for workplace safety. Protective restrictions based on female fertility provide them with a convenient mask for discriminating against women in high paying industrial jobs. In the same section, Maureen Hatch details the many workplace toxic substances that damage male fertility. Nevertheless, managers prefer to focus on women's sensitivity to these materials.

Can a common ground be found for women and labor in the occupational health and safety movement?

Pregnancy has always been a special burden for the woman worker in this country. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 inadequately addressed the needs of pregnant women workers, according to Chavkin. The contradictions and shortcomings of current maternity leave programs, health insurance plans and managerial directives on women's job responsibilities during the pre- and post-natal periods leave working mothers in a bind. Chavkin offers examples from several other countries where maternity leave policies offer rational alternatives to new mothers. "The U.S. is alone among the industrialized nations of the world in not providing compensation to the working woman at the time of childbirth," she notes.

One topic not covered adequately in *Double Exposure* is the issue of industrial health and safety for women in non-traditional jobs—women coalminers, electricians and firefighters, for example. Although there is some mention of the problems faced by women in "pioneer" positions, the writers do not raise the question of whether the arrival of women workers into male jobs has affected the enforcement of standards. Do women's caucuses in the union "brotherhoods" change the health and safety climate, or have the tough pressures of making a place for themselves held women back from filing complaints?

In spite of this omission, *Double Exposure's* scope is both comprehensive and precise. Harriett Rosenberg's essay on housework analyzes "wifework/motherwork" stresses and provides details on poisons found in common cleansers with suggestions for alternative products. The discussion on the home is further developed by Nick Freudenberg and Ellen Zaltzberg who describe community women's organizing against industrial dumps and toxic pesticide spray programs.

This community perspective is a meaningful extension of the anthology: in the last four years COSH and environmental groups have joined in coalition to halt industrial dumping, scoring some important victories. State and local "Right to Know" ordinances have been the result of several environmental/occupational safety campaigns. They require that information on the chemical composition of manufacturing materials be provided not only to employees but also to neighbors of polluting factories.

With its expert compilation of technical data, *Double Exposure* remains as readable as it is erudite, because Chavkin and her authors consistently highlight the necessity of informed activism.

The unions and the women's movement have sustained serious losses in recent years and do not commonly work in coalitions with each other. Recognizing the difficulty of the situation, *Double Exposure's* writers nevertheless advocate cooperative organizing. Women need to work, and they need to work safely.

■ Miriam Frank teaches Humanities at New York University and is secretary at the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. She is a co-author of the film study guide for *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*.

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What Do Unions Do?

By Richard B. Freeman and
James L. Medoff
Basic Books, 293 pp., \$22.95

By Larry Mishel

In the age of Reagan, it's heartening to hear some good words about unions—especially from mainstream economists. Richard Freeman and James Medoff, economists at Harvard, have compiled an evaluation of private sector unionism that concludes that "unionism generally serves as a force for social and economic good."

Freeman and Medoff (F&M) confront the prevailing view among economists that unions are socially detrimental. By raising wages, according to classic economic theory, unions cause higher prices and the substitution of machinery for labor leading to less employment in the union sector. Lower job opportunities in the organized sector, in turn, cause more competition for jobs and thus lower wages in the unorganized sector. Milton Friedman adds the additional critique that unions primarily help the skilled and highest paid union members. This implies that unions increase inequity among workers. Union gains come at the expense of consumers (who pay higher prices), of unorganized workers (who get lower wages) and they only benefit the privileged elite among workers.

But, F&M argue, there are two sides to unionism: a monopoly side and a collective voice for workers. The monopoly side is labor's ability to raise wages above competitive levels. Unions also provide a collective voice for workers to "bring actual and desired working conditions closer together." The only other alternative for workers is the market mechanism that forces them to find better work elsewhere.

They argue that since a collective voice expresses all workers' preferences it can be more efficient than the market mechanism that orients employer behavior toward the worker most likely to quit. If management responds positively and uses the bargaining process to improve the workplace and to learn worker preferences then, F&M claim, collective bargaining can result in lower turnover, more effective and fairer compensation packages and practices, increased training, better working conditions, better morale and increased productivity.

They build their case through statistical analyses of worker and employer behavior. Here are a few examples:

- Unions have been able to raise their members' compensation 20 to 30 percent above what they could obtain in the unorganized sector. According to F&M, the "social costs of the monopoly wage gains" resulting from resource misallocations are very modest, about .3 percent of gross national product or \$30 per person.

- Unions decrease wage inequality. This is because unions equalize pay differences between plants in an industry, equalize pay for jobs within plants, reduce the differences in wages between skilled and unskilled, and bring blue-collar pay closer to white-collar pay. These equaliz-

ing effects within the union sector outweigh the disparities caused by unionized blue-collar workers being paid more than unorganized blue-collar workers.

- Unionized employers earn a lower return on their investment.

They conclude from their empirical evidence that unions are a plus on the overall social balance sheet, even though they are a minus on the corporate balance sheet. They argue that public policy should strengthen the unions by encouraging "quality of work life" programs, for example, and weakening the monopoly power through industry deregulation and free international trade. Public policy toward unions should be based on "what unions actually do in the society and on what, under the best circumstances, they can do to improve the well-being of the free enterprise system, and of us all."

They admit, "The picture of unions as nondemocratic institutions run by corrupt labor bosses is a myth"; and the decline in union representation is due principally to the dramatic increase in both legal and illegal management actions to forestall unionization.

Critical support.

What Do Unions Do? makes debate about the economic impact of unions accessible to the public and will improve labor's position in public discourse. It is heartening that so many of their findings are not consistent with mainstream analysis. Yet it is disturbing that they accept the claim of mainstream economists that unions' influence on wage levels is bad for society. Implicit in their critique of labor's monopoly side is the notion that non-union wages—those produced by the market—are the "right" ones. On what basis? There are certainly factors that inhibit job mobility—community ties, lack of information about better jobs and loss of seniority, pension rights and skills tied to a specific job, not to mention sexism and racism. Why is the division of income between profits and wages in the non-union sector the "right" one?

The fact that F&M sell unions as beneficial for the well-being of the free enterprise system says more about the state of public discussion than about unionism. This is false packaging. Clearly, unions in the U.S. are not currently fighting to challenge capitalism. But, as F&M point out, "Management power within enterprises is curtailed by unionism." Unions raise wages above the levels desired by employers, lowering their profits. In their political role, unions have sought—and sometimes won—legislation that restricts management's economic decision making—minimum wages, hours of work, OSHA, product safety, environmental protection and plant-closing legislation. Unions do challenge at least one tenet of "the free enterprise system"—management's ability to maximize profits as it sees fit. Rhetoric about "free enterprise" obscures the contradictory role that even conservative unionism plays under capitalism in the U.S.

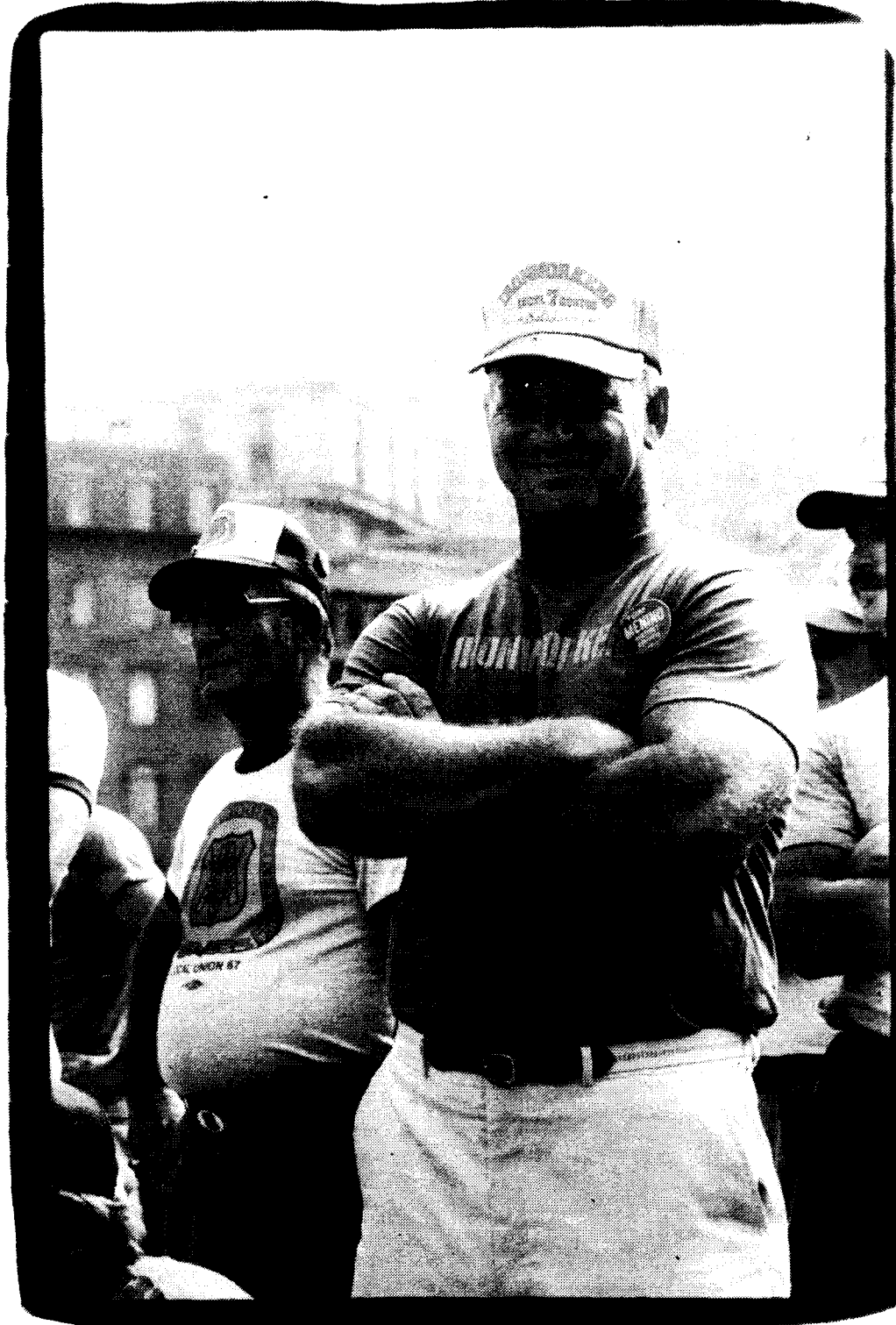
Workers have been able to make economic gains through their unions, partially at the expense of profits. The greatest

gains (relative to their earning power in the unorganized sector) have been made by black and unskilled workers (in both craft and industrial unions), while unionized women workers have made gains equal to or greater than male workers. Union economic success has varied across industries depending on labor's ability to take advantage of management's power over prices (in concentrated and regulated industries); to maintain union organization among competing employers or workers; and, in most cases, to centralize bargaining in firms, industries and geographic areas.

And, as F&M point out, unions have had an egalitarian impact within the union sector by equalizing wages across plants and firms in an industry, compressing wage differences between skilled and unskilled workers and by having wages set for jobs rather than individuals. Recent employer efforts to weaken and centralize bargaining and to lower unskilled wages (while maintaining skilled wages) shows that management understands—and opposes—labor's egalitarian

ECONOMIC THEORY

In defense of unions for the free market



Lionel Delvingne

policies.

While recognizing union gains, there are ultimate limits to unions' bargaining power. In a decentralized system of bargaining (contracts often cover only one plant of a firm or a small firm in an industry), union gains are tied to the market position and viability of particular capitalists. Many items that are provided through legislation in other countries (vacations, hours of work, health insurance, pensions) have to be bargained for employer-by-employer in the U.S. Moreover, union bargaining gains can be undercut by lower standards in the non-union sector.

In the U.S. organizing is a costly, legalistic battle fought plant by plant so that maintaining and extending union organization is difficult, especially when there is a militant corporate opposition. Management also has many tools to inhibit union bargaining gains; threats of (and actual) plant shutdowns, bankruptcy, work relocation, subcontracting and double-breasting (creating non-union alter egos as in construction and airlines).

There is also growing competitive pressures on unionized sectors resulting from foreign competition, deregulation, new internal competition (e.g., mini-mills in steel) and excess capacity. As a result, more companies are turning to the grab-bag of successful corporate strategies to stall or reverse union gains and to prevent further union organizing.

Under Reagan high unemployment and increased corporate diversification are eroding the power of labor's primary weapon, the strike. Other weapons have been removed from labor's arsenal by the law (e.g., secondary boycotts).

A book like *What Do Unions Do?* is important in combating a conservative rhetoric about unions. But the continued viability of collective bargaining in making advances, as well as preserving shop-floor power, grievance procedures, etc., depends on enhancing labor's ability to maintain union organization in existing unionized sectors and to extend it to new ones.

■ *Larry Mishel works in the United Autoworkers Research Department.*



Quartet Films Incorporated

ARTS«»ENTERTAINMENT

MOVIE

There's no sanity clause

By Pat Aufderheide

A Question of Silence demonstrates with savage humor that behind the bizarre is the ordinary. The film's shock value has carried it a lot further than you'd expect a first feature by a Dutch woman would get.

A boutique manager is murdered—with coat hangers, dress racks and high heels, no less—by several women who don't know each other until the moment they converged on the man. The movie is not so much a who-dun-it—although that too is in question, since the three women say they were alone in the shop and we know otherwise—as why-dun-it. And just to heighten the perversity, director Marlene Gorris tells us the answer with silence.

The outrageousness is heightened by the film's utterly predictable style, much like the architecture, clothing and social-welfare ethic of supremely bourgeois

Dutch society. The film intercuts the arrest, sentencing and trial of the three women with flashbacks illuminating—up to a point—what happened. The high production values are testimony not only to Gorris' surehanded directorial style, which with no-nonsense efficiency points the camera where she wants us to look, but also to the Dutch government's policy of subsidizing filmmakers. (In the Netherlands, the government funds any film that can first garner 36.5 percent of its budget privately.) But surely the bureaucrats in charge never expected this film—one that argues the existence of endemic violence behind the mask of equanimity.

The three women involved are as different as women's options in Western Europe today. One is a meek housewife (Edda Barends), surrounded by suburban child care equipment and given to chain-smoking in front of the living-room TV. Another is a raucous corner-cafe waitress

(Nelly Frijda), whose native cynicism is given a special edge by a bad marriage. The third is a precision-tooled executive secretary (Henriette Tol), her manner as crisp as her high-rise office-building clothes. And yet underneath the surface there must have been something in common for all of them to join wordlessly in murderous assault on a person who haplessly triggered their anger.

Further, none of them repents the act that each admits; none resists police or jailers. This looks like a case for the social workers. So the court assigns a psychiatrist (Cox Habbema), a woman with an interesting job, a witty and socially critical lawyer husband and an art-filled home, to figure out if the women are insane. If they are the state will make allowances. It is willing to stretch the social contract to absorb the occasional outrage. The problem is that this outrage refuses the labels of accident or insanity.

The psychiatrist's job is com-

A male boutique owner is murdered by several women who don't know each other.

plicated by the fact that the housewife won't talk at all. As she tries to crack the wall of silence, she discovers that the housewife is only the most dramatic instance of a more general phenomenon. The three defendants each has her own style of silence. The waitress, for instance, chortles and belly-laughs away any serious questions while the secretary snaps out non-responses. But they too are only the most extreme proof that no one is really talking about the most pervasive relationship conditioning social life: the relationship between men and women.

She begins to understand when the secretary bursts through her own self-control to shout an explanation for the housewife's muteness: "No one was listening!" It seems that, throughout Dutch society, women have gone into hiding behind their cardboard-cutout roles. Their resentment can build for a lifetime before an arbitrary incident accidentally triggers its release.

The psychiatrist finds out just how systemic the problem is when she also violates the rules. Finally understanding the logic of the antisocial act, she decides that the women are not insane. Faced with probing the act for understandable motives, the judges, as well as the psychiatrist's husband, attack her. The courtroom becomes a stripped-down battlefield in the war between the sexes.

But it's a war conducted as much with laughter as with outrage. Gorris has accurately pitched the tone of the film to its pointedly allegorical plot, and her bet that we will cheerfully trade in suspension of disbelief for poking fun at sexual stereotypes pays off. Women who waded through *Splash* while their

dates were going ga-ga will enjoy the fact that this movie contains male frontal nudity but nary a sight of female flesh.

In fact, laughter is a weapon for this revenge-fantasy with a social conscience. For the waitress, laughter is armor; for the viewers, it's a friendly shock of recognition for the film's outrageous propositions.

But as the film builds, so does the laughter. It's the sound of women breaking through the silence. The laughter among the defendants, the psychiatrist and the women in the court room, at the film's climax, overwhelms the judges and engulfs the viewers. And at that point, it's not funny anymore—it's cathartic.

A Question of Silence is the rare work of art that deserves the term "subversive." It subverts the consensus we didn't know we had. It makes a mild-mannered mother into a murderer, charges welfare-state policies with inhumanity and makes hash of the notion that silence can be bought with comfort.

It is the opposite of the social-problem films churned out every year by Western European filmmakers about drugs, mental illness or youthful alienation. Here it's society that's the problem.

The film has already made plenty of noise in Europe, and it should not be surprising that male critics have come down hard on what they call the film's stereotyping of men. But since the film unabashedly exploits social types for both its male and female characters, the criticism only underlines its argument. It seems that even for critics the stereotyping of women is so common that it goes unnoticed unless the tables are turned.

©Pat Aufderheide

For distribution information, contact Quartet Films, Inc., 733 Green Bay Road, Wilmette, IL 60091.

CALENDAR

CHICAGO, IL

September 13

Chicago DSA benefit showing of *Seeing Red*. "An oral history structured around a series of interviews with mostly ex-Communist Party members who were radicalized through the Depression" (*Village Voice*). "Fine, tough...moving! Social history of a high order" (*New York Times*). Showings at 6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m. reception for co-directors Jim Klein, Julia Reichart, plus Dorothy Healey and Carl Hirsch, two people profiled in film. \$10 tickets includes one showing plus reception and refreshments. At Facets, 1517 W. Fullerton. For tickets, call 871-7700.

September 14

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September 17-18

Dr. Helen Caldicott, President Emerita of Physicians for Social Responsibility, will be speaking on "We the People: A Prescription for Ending the Arms Race" at the following times and locations: Monday, Sept. 17, 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. at the De Paul University Law School, 25 East Jackson, 2nd Floor Auditorium; Monday evening, Sept. 17, 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Mother McAuley High School, 3737 W. 99th St.; Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 18, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. at Chicago Medical School, Main Auditorium, 3333 Green Bay Road, North Chicago; Tuesday evening, Sept. 18, 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Brook Church, 3700 Dundee Road, Northbrook. All open to the public.



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Films

Continued from page 16

world-famous Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), which is also based in Chicago. This FEPA link allowed the festival to broaden its focus and present an even more extensive selection. The 1983 festival exhibited 25 films and video works, including pieces from Australia, Northern Ireland (a film entitled *The Black and the Green* in which black civil rights activists compare notes with IRA members) and the South African ghetto of Soweto.

"Our affiliation with FEPA is what really assured our continued existence," Webb noted. "The first year of the festival, the money came out of my own pocket. I entered into this project full of naivete, thinking the idea was so powerful that it would just take off into the stratosphere with money and support pouring in. We have received some much needed support—many people really believe in this festival—but not enough to really make this thing go like it should. I've personally had to make many sacrifices to keep it going and, frankly, I'm getting spread a bit too thin."

That strain is beginning to show. Webb had booked Harley Cokliss' film, *Battletruck (Warlords of the 21st Century)*, as part of Blacklight '84 under the as-

sumption that Cokliss, a former Chicagoan, was black. He later discovered that Cokliss was Jewish and had to cancel the screening as well as retract an invitation to Cokliss to attend the screening.

One highlight of the 1983 festival was the Spencer Williams Jr. retrospective. Williams, who is best known as the dim-witted, monosyllabic "Andy" of the *Amos 'n' Andy* TV series, was also a filmmaker of considerable talent. He wrote, directed and produced many films during the "race movie" era, two of which (*Blood of Jesus* and *Go Down Death*) were shown during the festival. Williams' prior success as an *auteur* of sorts, and his subsequent reduction in status to that of a video minstrel points to one of the paradoxes of life for blacks in integrated America.

Independent black filmmakers worked steadily and some even thrived during the first half of this century when the mainline movie industry was absolutely closed to black input. Since African-Americans were nowhere to be found in Hollywood, black filmmakers started producing movies aimed exclusively at image-starved black audiences. These were termed "race movies" and they spanned the thematic spectrum from love stories to Westerns to detective mysteries. So popular and commercially successful were these movies that they supported a legion of actors, directors, theater owners and producers. Race movies were pumped-out from as early as 1916 to as late as

1948. The official demise of segregation also killed the race movies system.

"We made a big mistake when we let that system die out," said Webb. "Racism in the movie industry is almost as bad now as it was in the days when it was official. But we were fooled into allowing our alternatives to disappear. Part of Blacklight's mission is to help resurrect such a system."

"We often forget that integration has had some negative effects on the African-American community," he added. "For example, before housing desegregation laws went into effect, the black community was more diverse and much more vibrant. You could find successful blacks living next door to those who weren't so successful, and thus we always had positive role models right along with the negative ones. These days, the more successful blacks just pack up and split, leaving their former communities without symbols of success and achievement. You tell me what's better."

The success of this year's Blacklight festival exceeded all expectations. "Many people—and it's not just blacks, we've had a significant white attendance at this year's program—recognize the importance of providing black images that transcend the prevailing ones of useless underclass criminals or grinning jokesters. The black presence in the major films is even less complex now than when we conceived Blacklight in '82. There's Eddie Murphy and Grace Jones and that's

IN THESE TIMES SEPT. 12-18, 1984 15 about it. Oh yeah, and there's Prince. Now, I don't have anything against any of those talented blacks, but both Grace Jones and Prince are sort of novelty act entertainers, while Murphy and Richard Pryor (the other bankable black) are both comedians by trade. Hey, where's the serious, complex part for the serious, complex black actor?

"We opened our festival with a beautiful film, directed and scored by a talented and complex black man, about a talented and complex black man and we pulled sell-out crowds. This was the Gordon Parks film. While it was in Chicago it was also screened by one of Chicago's high-powered film critics and it received an excellent review. We had to turn dozens of people away, unfortunately."

Although Parks' *Solomon Northrop's Odyssey* is scheduled for release to public television, the overwhelmingly positive critical response that greeted its Blacklight showing may earn it a theatrical release.

Parks himself was effusive in praising the organizers of the festival, which in addition to Webb and Mims, included Keith Boleman and Dwayne Johnson. "I think we must applaud those who have the faith and the energy to provide this kind of forum for black filmmakers," he said. "They need all the support they can get because I know it isn't an easy job to put this kind of thing together."

Webb smiled when he recalled Parks' statement. And then he went to sleep. ■

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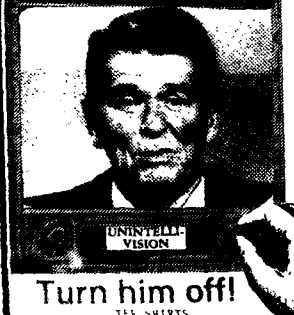
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Blacklight



A FESTIVAL OF BLACK INDEPENDENT CINEMA

By Salim Muwakkil

FLOYD WEBB COULD BARELY keep his eyes open as he told *In These Times* of his satisfaction with a job well done. He had just shepherded one of this country's most comprehensive exhibitions of black cinema and had earned both his pride and his exhaustion.

Officially titled "Blacklight: A Festival of Black Independent Cinema," the exhibition in Chicago ran from July 27 to August 10 and featured 40-plus films and video pieces from five continents. This was the festival's third year and, according to the 31-year-old Webb, a Chicago-based filmmaker who originated and directs the annual event, it was by far the most successful.

Nearly 10,000 people came out during the festival's two-week run to view films from the U.S., Papua, New Guinea, Jamaica, Peru, Brazil, Nigeria, Ghana, Upper Volta, Mauritania and Britain. A day-long screening of videos by U.S. blacks and a sampling of award-winning commercials produced by black advertising agencies; a soap opera pilot scripted by the always outrageous Ishmael Reed, a

film extolling the goals and accomplishments of the late Maurice Bishop and his New Jewel Movement in Grenada and a film by the celebrated Cuban director Sergio Giral (who was also in attendance).

An additional festival highlight was a screening of Gordon Parks' *Solomon Northrop's Odyssey*, a powerful, stylishly rendered slave narrative slated for an upcoming showing on public television's *American Playhouse*. Parks (a modern-day Renaissance man who earns his living as a photographer, journalist, novelist, composer and poet as well as a film director) was also on hand. He answered audience questions following the screening and appeared at a packed reception in his honor.

Through all of this activity hovered Webb, overseeing and troubleshooting. "The whole idea for this event was born in my head, so I guess I feel kind of parental about it," he explained, seated in an office he shares with the editor of a black-oriented Chicago publication.

"It's a good thing that I have this feeling of responsibility about it because I've had to handle just about everything. From contacting the hard-to-find distributors and haggling over costs (many Third World distributors think that all Americans are rich, regardless of color), to arranging transportation and lodging for guests, to securing funding for the

festival's operation, to personally supervising the printing of the schedule brochures, to arranging venues...man, I tell you, it's been exhausting and in some senses even frustrating. But this festival and what it stands for is so crucial, in my opinion, that it just has to be kept alive."

Webb conceived the idea for an independent black film festival in 1981 when he decided to move beyond his disgust with the movie industry's stock depictions of blacks and take some concerted, organized action to provide alternatives to those depictions.

"For years we complained about the lack of complex black images coming from the Hollywood illusion factory," Webb said. "But after a while I simply began to understand that we had to do more than just complain. Why should we expect white Americans to present black Americans from any other perspective than their own?"

"Steven Spielberg is only doing what I want to do," he continued. "He's writing dialog and creating images from his own frame of reference, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Now we can either boycott the movie industry, as the NAACP periodically suggests, or we can begin to concentrate our energy and resources to produce filmic images of ourselves as we know ourselves to be. I decided that the best way to counter the negative-to-nil presence of blacks in Hollywood films would be to develop an independent vehicle that could present black cinema on its own terms."

Fired up by his vision, Webb organized the Black Independent Cinema Festival, a

four-night affair that ran in Chicago during the summer of 1981.

Quality black films.

"It demonstrated to me that a significant audience exists for serious, quality black films. We had a full house on each night of the festival. And I was further convinced of black cinema's commercial viability by a black film exhibition I helped organize in London in 1982. The people came out in crowds so unexpectedly large we couldn't begin to accommodate them all."

Later that year, with the assistance of Chicago filmmakers Sergio Mims and Terry White, Webb originated the Blacklight festival. "Our intention was both to provide alternatives to the images of blacks being projected by the mainstream media and to present a showcase for the growing number of black filmmakers from around the world."

Through his frequent trips to Europe, South America and Africa, Webb has cultivated a global network of contacts that has given Blacklight access to films from widely differing cultural and geographical contexts.

The first Blacklight festival, which was given invaluable aid by the Chicago Filmmakers and the Film Center of the Art Institute of Chicago, was an eight-day affair featuring 15 films. It showcased three films by black British filmmakers that were U.S. premieres, one classic—*The Other Side of the River*—by Seex Ngaydo Ba, a Senegalese filmmaker who is a disciple of Ousman Sembene, and Woody King's excellent and controversial film on Malcolm X, *Death of a Prophet*.

During its second year Blacklight became affiliated with the Chicago-based Forum for the Evolution of the Progressive Arts (FEPA), an aggressive arts organization that patterns itself after the

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